

Updates to Vermont Wetland Maps

Wetlands are found throughout Vermont and can sometimes be difficult to identify. Wetlands are also known as swamps, marshes, and bogs. Wetlands provide homes for wildlife, store flood water, and protect our clean water. The State currently has an outdated map that shows the general location of some protected wetlands (Class I and II) called the Vermont Significant Wetlands Inventory (VSWI). The map is neither completely accurate nor comprehensive. The State is working to improve the map for two main reasons:

1. Adding wetlands to the map. Many protected wetlands are not shown on the current map. The State will update the maps to include more significant wetlands that exist now so you can easily find them. Adding wetlands will make them easier to protect too. There will be less unmapped protected wetlands after the update.

The State proposes to add the following types of wetlands to the map:

- Wetlands over a half-acre in size;
- Wetlands connected to water;
- Wetlands that are a vernal pool or headwater
- Wetlands that contain significant natural communities, or rare species habitat.

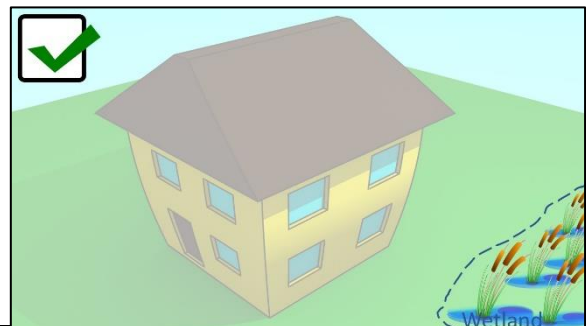
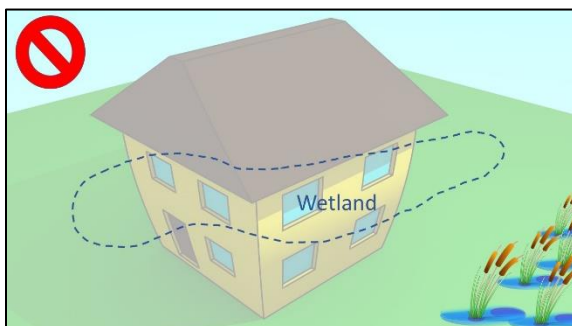
These wetland types are already presumed Class II and protected wetlands under the Vermont Wetland Rules.

However, this map effort will include a formal general wetland determination decision, which is a Statutory requirement for adding them to the VSWI.

2. Revising wetland locations. The existing map sometimes show wetland in the wrong locations. The State will improve the existing map so it is more accurate in showing where there may be protected wetlands. This will include registration error correction, deletion of area that is not wetland, and adding wetland area that is contiguous to the current mapping.

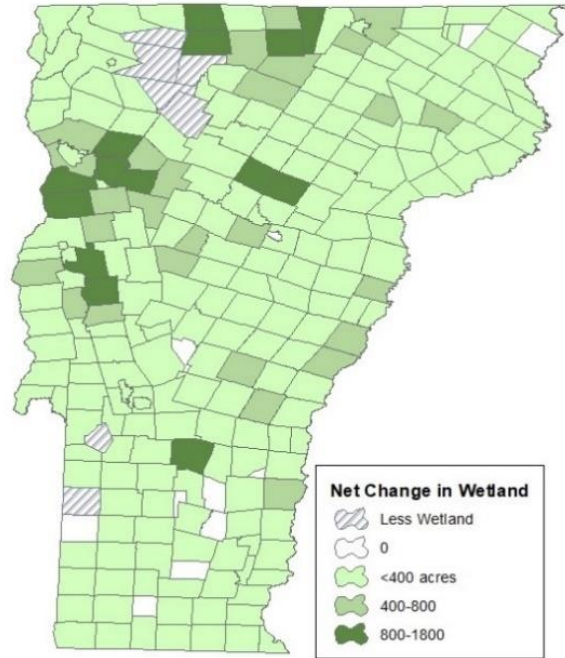


The map updates will include wetlands with habitat for plants like this Showy Lady's Slipper.



Map updates will correct map location errors like moving the mapping from a house to where the wetland is next to the house.

Methodology: The Wetlands Program is using the current Wetland Advisory Layer as the basis for adding and editing wetland polygons to the VSWI. Only those advisory polygons which meet the wetland types above and those contiguous with existing VSWI polygons will be added. The distribution of map updates is not equal throughout the State, but future map updates will address those gaps. See the map to the right to learn how much the maps are changing in your community.



Towns with the Most Wetland Additions
Charlotte
Essex
Enosburg
Middlebury
Worcester
Calais
New Haven
Westfield
Berkshire
Richmond
Troy
Shelburne
Williston
Mt. Holly

Future VSWI updates: The issuance of a general determination will allow the Wetlands Program to continue to add existing but unmapped wetlands to the VSWI map over time that meet the characteristics of the general determination without a subsequent individual determination. This will streamline permit applications which include wetlands that are not currently on the VSWI. Additional bulk VSWI edits will occur as watershed-wide National Wetlands Inventories (NWI) are completed. The next NWI completion will be of the Otter Creek Basin. Individual determinations may still be filed to petition for classification determinations for Class II or Class III and related map changes.

Want to learn more? To view draft documents, maps, and to provide comments visit <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands/rulemaking>.

Do you have a wetland? The VSWI is intended as a planning tool and are designed to be used in combination with the wetland screening tool and direct assistance from the District Wetlands Ecologist and Wetland Consultants. To find out if you might have a wetland on your property, use our simple Wetland Screening Tool:



<https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/wetlandScreening/>

The Vermont Wetlands Program is here to help. If you are proposing construction activities near a wetland, please contact your District Wetlands Ecologist regardless of whether it is mapped or not. Not all protected wetlands are mapped. See our Contact Page:

<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands/contact>

Activities in Wetlands: Any unauthorized activity or construction in a significant wetland or buffer prior to its mapping is still a violation of the Wetland Rules. The Agency will investigate complaints of unauthorized activity in significant wetlands, including newly mapped significant wetlands, as those complaints are received. Generally, reports of ongoing unauthorized activity or construction within significant wetlands, including recently mapped wetlands, will receive priority with the goal of preventing further disturbance within the wetlands. Please do not submit wetland rule violation complaints in the comment section of the draft maps, complaints should be made [here](#).

Farming: Please note that land used to grow food or crops before the Wetland Rules were established are considered exempt, even in areas of mapped wetland. Please refer to our [Vermont Farming Activities in Wetlands and Buffers Document](#) for more details on this issue.